

Message Text

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E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: OVIP (KISSINGER, HENRY A.)

SUBJECT: CONGRESSIONAL CONSULTATIONS ON PROPOSED ARMS SALES
TO CHILE

FOR SECRETARY FROM ROGERS

1. IN ACCORDANCE WITH YOUR INSTRUCTIONS, I BRIEFED CONGRESSMAN DANTE FASCELL, CHAIRMAN OF THE HOUSE INTER-AMERICAN AFFAIRS SUBCOMMITTEE, ON OUR PROPOSED PLAN TO MAKE AVAILABLE TO THE GOC FOR FMS CASH SALE A MINIMUM DEFENSE CAPABILITY PACKAGE CONSISTING OF APPROXIMATELY 100 USED M-48 MEDIUM TANKS, A SIMILAR NUMBER OF ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIERS AND A LIMITED NUMBER OF THE TOW ANTI-TANK WEAPON. I EMPHASIZED TO FASCELL THAT WE WERE CONCERNED ABOUT THE RISK TO REGIONAL PEACE AND STABILITY BECAUSE OF PERU'S OVERWHELMING MILITARY SUPERIORITY OVER CHILE, ESPECIALLY IN VIEW OF PERU'S RECENT PURCHASE OF APPROXIMATELY 145 TO 200 SOVIET MEDIUM TANKS.

2. FASCELL'S REACTION WAS NEGATIVE AND UNENTHUSIASTIC. HE STATED THAT THIS PROPOSED SALE WOULD BE INTERPRETED BY
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HIS COLLEAGUES AS A DIRECT SLAP TO THE CONGRESS,

ESPECIALLY IN VIEW OF RECENT CONGRESSIONAL RESTRICTIONS IN THE FAA ON MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO THE GOC BECAUSE OF THEIR HUMAN RIGHTS PERFORMANCE. FASCELL ADDED THAT MOST CONGRESSMAN WOULD VIEW THIS PROPOSED SALE AS AN ACCELE-

TION OF THE ARMS RACE IN LATIN AMERICA RATHER THAN THE MAINTENANCE OF GEOPOLITICAL STABILITY.

3. IN ADDITION TO POINTING OUT THE CURRENT ARMS IMBALANCE BETWEEN CHILE AND PERU, I STRESSED TO FASCELL THAT CHILE'S WEAKENED ECONOMY, THE GOC'S ISOLATION FROM MAJOR ARMS PRODUCERS, AND THE PERUVIAN MILITARY'S REVANCHIST SPIRIT WERE FACTORS THAT COULD NOT BE IGNORED. I ARGUED THAT THE PROVISION OF THE DEFENSIVE ARMS PACKAGE WOULD IMPROVE CHANCES FOR PEACE IN THE REGION BY CALMING THE CHILEANS SERIOUS, ALMOST PARANOIC, APPREHENSIONS, AND AT THE SAME TIME GIVING THE PERUVIANS PAUSE BY MAKING IT CLEAR TO THEM THAT AN ATTACK WOULD NOT BE COSTLESS.

4. FASCELL WAS NOT PERSUADED BY THE REGIONAL STABILITY ARGUMENT, DESPITE MY INSISTENCE THAT A CHILE-PERU CONFLICT COULD GREATLY EXACERBATE TENSION THROUGHOUT THE HEMISPHERE, AND PERHAPS EVEN SUCK OTHER COUNTRIES INTO THE FIGHT. HE MENTIONED THAT HE HAD RECENTLY BEEN BRIEFED BY DIA. THAT AGENCY ESTIMATED A 5 PERCENT CHANCE OF INTENDED CONFLICT (AND A 25 PERCENT ACCIDENTAL) IN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS. (DIA HAD ALSO TOLD FASCELL THAT THE PERUVIAN TANKS WERE AT LEAST OFFSET BY CHILE'S SUPERIORITY IN OFFICERS AND OTHER AREAS, AND THAT THE TWO FORCES WERE NOW PRETTY MUCH IN BALANCE.) FASCELL WAS PESSIMISTIC THAT THE OAS COULD BE AN EFFECTIVE PEACE-KEEPING INSTITUTION, BUT HE JUDGED NEVERTHELESS THAT OUR PROVISION OF ARMS IN AN EFFORT TO KEEP THE PEACE, WOULD SET OFF "SCREAMS" IN CONGRESS. FASCELL ASSERTED THAT THE BOTTOM LINE PROBLEM WAS THAT THE GOC WAS JUST NOT WILLING TO PAY THE HUMAN RIGHTS PRICE, AS HE PUT IT, ESSENTIAL TO DEFEND AN ARMS PACKAGE POLITICALLY. AS PRECONDITIONS, FASCELL SAID, THE GOC SHOULD (1) RELEASE POLITICAL PRISONERS AND DETAINEES, (2) ALLOW POLITICAL PARTIES TO MEET OPENLY, AND (3) EASE OFF ON THE

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REPRESSION IN THE UNIVERSITIES.

5. FASCELL GAVE US THE CLEAR IMPRESSION THAT HE WOULD NOT LIFT A FINGER TO HELP US ON THE PROPOSAL, SINCE HE FELT IT WOULD BE DISTINCTLY UNPOPULAR. HE ADDED THAT HE THOUGHT THERE WOULD BE NO AID BILL THIS YEAR ANYWAY. INGERSOLL

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